

Causes and Consequences of Pre-Marital Sex among Female Students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Premarital sex is a source of concern among female students in tertiary institutions of learning particularly in Oke-Ogun Polytechnic of Oyo state, Nigeria. The study, therefore, investigated causes and consequences of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic, Oyo state. Researchers-developed instrument tagged “Causes and Consequences of Premarital Sex Questionnaire (CCPSQ)” was used to collect the data. Two hundred and fifty respondents participated in the study, and simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants. The findings of the study revealed that negative peer pressure, cohabitation and sexual harassment were the major causes of premarital sex, while the study also revealed that unsafe abortion, school dropout and unwanted pregnancy were the major consequences of premarital sex among respondents. The study thus recommended that school counsellors should constantly be in contact with female students to educate them on sexuality and how best to manage their sexual feelings without necessarily engaging in premarital sex. School authorities should use media means to counsel female students on the causes and consequences of premarital sex. Health educators should rise to the challenge of organising enlightenment activities in schools in order to provide adequate reproductive health information to female students.

Keywords: Causes, Consequences, Premarital sex, Female students, Oke-Ogun Polytechnic

Introduction

Premarital sex is becoming more popular worldwide, and Africa is no exception. Nigerians are conservative; talking about sex with students under the age of 18 years is

frowned at. In some African cultures, sex is considered a sin by a number of religions. Unguided by adults, children learn from peers and the media. Instead of receiving proper sex education at home or in school, children learn the crucial subject of sex in negative ways. Premarital sex is a common occurrence among female students in Nigerian higher institutions of learning. It has become a norm among many female students while abstinence is no longer regarded as a virtue. Those who abstain or are chaste are regarded as uncivilized.

Premarital sex is sexual activity that occurs prior to marriage and is typically observed among female students in tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria. It involves incest, rape, defilement, and fornication. Premarital sex is caused by a variety of factors, including youth curiosity, media influence, peer pressure, an unquenchable lust for money, cultural influences, sexual harassment, poor school discipline, school location, religious teachings and literacy, indecent dress, lust, pornography, insanity and sex promiscuity, as well as moral decadence. In light of the high rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among female students between the ages of 18 and 24, more students within the age range are dropping out of school due to unintended or unwanted pregnancies (Olatunji, 2019).

Premarital sex refers to sexual activity between individuals who have not taken a marital vow or who are not regarded culturally as having entered a marriage institution. Premarital sex is typically not a problem for people who have reached sexual maturity because they may view it as a natural response to a natural stimulus. However, premarital sex is morally wrong in almost every human society that views marriage as a necessary condition for sexual tolerance, especially among young women who are thought to be more susceptible to health issues. An estimated one-quarter of sexually active teenagers in Nigeria have been impacted by the increase in premarital sex (Olatunji, 2019). It undoubtedly has detrimental effects, including unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and social and emotional effects (Chika & Ikechukwu, 2013; Kinsler, Sneed, Morisky & Ang, 2014; Raji, 2018).

Both Christianity and Islam, the two main religions in Nigeria, vehemently condemn premarital sex and call for specific sanctions against offenders. Premarital sex is occasionally rebranded as fornication due to its connotation. According to Islamic law,

chapter 24 verse 2 of the Holy Quran, anyone caught engaging in fornication sex that occurs before marriage, or premarital sex should be publicly flogged with 100 stripes and no one should show sympathy for the offender. In addition, premarital sex is described as an evil and a shameful deed in Quran chapter 17 verse 32. These verses from the Quran make it clear that Islam forbids premarital sex. According to Christian doctrine, "the marriage bed should be kept pure, for God will judge all the sexually immoral" (Heb.13:4). In this context, refraining from sexual activity prior to marriage is referred to as keeping the marriage bed holy, while any unacceptable sexual behaviour, particularly premarital sex, is referred to as sexual immorality. Thus, it is also evident that having sexual relations with someone prior to getting married is forbidden for Christians (premarital sex).

Asekun-Olarinmoye, Asekun-Olarinmoye, Adebimpe, and Omisore (2014) claimed that there are different sexual behaviours that precipitate female adolescents more likely to engage in premarital sex. Autoeroticism is a subcategory of this behaviour in which a teen tries to sate her sexual itch by acting alone and on herself. Such behaviours include masturbation (the manual stimulation of one's own genitalia for sexual pleasure), sexual fantasy (a mental exercise involving imagining, mapping, desiring, and navigating, in abstract, into sexual pleasure), and erotic dreams (an unconscious state especially during sleep when one experiences sensual feeling). Pornographic viewing, kissing, and touching are additional sexual behaviours that may predispose a teen to having premarital sex (frotteurism).

Children's moral upbringing is the responsibility of the family institution. The character development of the children is greatly influenced by the family. Parents who lack morality will undoubtedly be unable to raise morally upright children. The values that the children observed in their families are expressed by them (Stamatakos, Sargedí & Konstantinos, 2014). When someone is providing love, guidance, acceptance, and affection to a child and these things are lacking, especially if they come from their peers or the opposite sex, that person will exert more influence over the child (Standfort, Orr, Hirsch, & Santelli, 2008; World Health Organization, 2012). In some situations, living with single parents can lead to "distorted family relationships and family dysfunction." Therefore, a lack of communication and a negative home environment encourage

adolescents to engage in premarital sex (Adama & Ejih, 2021; Angelo, Teketel, Aklilu & Hirut, 2020; Ghaffari, Gharghani & Rakshanderou, 2015).

The inability of parents to provide for their children's basic needs due to their own poverty may give kids the freedom to engage in early sexual behaviour. According to Offor and Offiah (2022), "the young woman in the family who seeks to have good future but belongs to a poor family turn to engage in a relationship with older men to pay for their school fees and provide for their other needs. Meanwhile, watching phonograph movies or videos is another reason adolescents engage in premarital sex. Pornography has the power to pique a person's sexual curiosity. Additionally, it can lead to someone abusing others sexually. People can be seduced by pornography's erotic appeal. According to Olatunji (2019), watching pornographic movies can inspire or motivate students to go further in committing evil than they originally planned.

Premarital sex can also be caused by peer pressure. It is widely believed that peers have a significant social influence on adolescents' social behaviour. Peer influence can occur on a variety of levels. Some sex peers serve as a significant source of sex-related knowledge and offer settings for sex, such as social gatherings and parties. In this way, friends who have had sexual experiences can act as role models and influence how others perceive the acceptability of sexual behaviour (Hofferth & Hayes, 2017). Teenagers' inability to resist peer pressure to have sex and the belief that at least half of their friends have had premarital sex are both important factors identified as being associated with sexual intercourse (Offor & Offiah, 2022). As a result, more female students are engaging in high-risk premarital behaviours that raise the possibility of an unstable marriage (Bhatta, Koirala, & Jha, 2013; Collins & Steinberg, 2016; Ugoji, 2014; Whitney, Renner, & Herrenkohl, 2010).

Premarital sex is strongly correlated with drug and alcohol abuse. Drugs are defined by Fadipe and Olakojo (2021) as chemical substances that are intentionally used to alter mood, perception, or consciousness. Adama and Ejih (2021) defined drug abuse as "the use of illicit drugs, the use of prescription drugs, or the use of over-the-counter drugs for purposes other than those for which they are indicated, in a manner, or in quantities other than directed" (p. 149). According to Arulogun, Ogbu and Dipeolu (2016), the abuse of drugs and other substances impairs judgement and causes addicts to

act in ways they wouldn't normally do when they weren't high. Abah (2013) and Mehmet (2006) stated as a result that "drugs could induce sexual desire and alcohol use have been identified as factors which may encourage unintentional sexual activities. However, it is clear that using drugs or alcohol can cause one to intentionally engage in premarital sex or be seduced into it.

According to a study by Hofferth and Hayes (2017), 84% of women in West Africa expressed attitudes in favour of premarital sexual behaviour. Additionally, it has been reported that over the past ten years, 63% female students in Nigeria's tertiary institutions have engaged in premarital sex (Center for Disease Control & Prevention, 2022). Consequences of pre-marital sex among undergraduate students of university of Nigeria was studied by Olatunji (2019), who found that 59.5% of female undergraduates had engaged in premarital sex by the age of 18. Another study in South West Nigeria found that adolescents had premarital sex 28.3% of the time (Morhason-Bello, Oladokun, Enakpene, Fabamwo & Obisesan, 2008). Since early sexual initiation lengthens the period of exposure to unintended pregnancies, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections, this raises a lot of concern. Young people who start having sex earlier seem more likely to do so with multiple partners or high-risk partners and are less likely to use condoms (Alade, Owoye & Bamidele, 2021; Ghani, Abdullah, Akil, & Nordin, 2014; Makenzius & Larsson, 2013).

In Nigeria, where conflict and war claimed more than 200,000 lives, AIDS claimed the lives of 2.2 million female adolescents in a single year (Offor & Offiah, 2022). Since the outbreak began, it has claimed 16.3 million lives in sub-Saharan Africa (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). The use of condoms has increased premarital sex among today's youth because they think it will shield them from harmful diseases like HIV/AIDS. In Nigeria, this has encouraged a lot of female students to participate in the act, but condoms do not offer complete immunity from the disease. Apparently, teenagers do not have adequate information nor receive counsel about how sensitive this topic is. This led the researchers to carry out a study on the causes and consequences of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the causes and consequences of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The research responds to the following questions:

- i. What are the causes of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State?
- ii. What are the consequences of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo State?

Methodology

Descriptive survey method was adopted for this study because the researchers are interested in finding out causes and consequences of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic in Oyo state. The target population for the study were the female students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic, and simple random sampling technique was applied to select two hundred and fifty participants during orientation programme for the OND and HND students. Validity was done by five experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Ajayi Crowther University. The reliability was done and the instrument was administered twice on a group of students at Polytechnic Ibadan within an interval of four weeks. The correlation of the two sets of scores, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was considered and the reliability coefficient was 0.69. Therefore, the instrument for data collection was designed by the researchers adopting it from the literature review. The instrument was tagged: "Causes and Consequences of Premarital Sex Questionnaire (CCPSQ)". The instrument has three parts i.e. sections A, B and C. Section A dealt with personal information, section B sought for causes of premarital sex, section C focused on consequences of premarital sex. Sections B and C were patterned in line with four (4) point Likert type rating scale format of: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; and Strongly Disagree. Mean scores up to 2.5 and above were accepted as the causes and consequences of premarital sex while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as not.

Results

All of the information gathered is discussed here. It provides a meaningful representation of the study's findings. Two hundred and fifty (250) samples were randomly selected for the study. The results of the study shed light on causes and consequences of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic in Oyo State.

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of Causes of Premarital Sex among Female Students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo state

Item No	Premarital sex among female students is caused by:	Mean	Rank
1	Negative peer pressure	3.89	1 st
11	Cohabitation	3.87	2 nd
9	Sexual harassment	3.83	3 rd
13	Influence of media	3.76	4 th
2	Indecent dressing	3.74	5 th
6	Lack of self-control	3.70	6 th
4	Insatiable desire for money	3.70	6 th
5	Poor school discipline	2.70	6 th
14	Curiosity	2.69	9 th
7	Ignorance	2.67	10 th
8	Location of school	2.63	11 th
10	Sense of loneliness	2.61	12 th
12	Degeneration of cultural values	2.58	13 th
3	Inadequate knowledge of reproductive health	2.56	14 th
15	Lack of parental counselling	2.51	15 th

Table 1 shows the mean and rank order of causes of premarital sex among female students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic in Oyo state. The table shows that all items were identified as the causes of premarital sex, because all the items were ranked above the mid-mean score of 2.50, then it can be said that respondents agreed with the causes of premarital sex listed on the table. Therefore, items with mean values of 3.89, 3.87 and 3.83 respectively preceded others and were ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The items indicated negative peer pressure, cohabitation, and sexual harassment. In addition, items 12, 3 and 15 with mean values of 2.58, 2.56 and 2.51 were the least ranked items, that is, 13th, 14th and 15th. They indicated degeneration of cultural values, inadequate knowledge of reproductive health and lack of parental counselling.

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of Consequences of Premarital Sex among Female Students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Oyo state

Item No	Premarital sex among female students can lead to:	Mean	Rank
14	Unsafe abortion	3.82	1 st
11	School dropout	3.80	2 nd
7	Unwanted pregnancy	3.78	3 rd
13	Sexually transmitted infections	3.76	4 th
12	Suicidal ideation	3.75	5 th
6	Negative self-image	3.70	6 th
4	Substance abuse	3.69	7 th
10	Victims of rituals	2.67	8 th
2	Loss of family support	2.64	9 th
9	Stigmatization	2.61	10 th
8	Low self-esteem	2.59	11 th
1	Poor academic performance	2.57	12 th
15	Single – parenting	2.56	13 th
3	Social isolation	2.56	13 th
5	Poor health conditions	2.50	15 th

Table 2 shows the mean and rank order of consequences of premarital sex among students of Oke-Ogun polytechnic, Oyo state. The table shows that all items were identified as the causes of premarital sex, because all the items were ranked above the mid-mean score of 2.50, then it can be said that respondents agreed with the causes of premarital sex listed on the table. Therefore, items with mean values of 3.82, 3.80 and 3.78 respectively preceded others and were ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The items indicated unsafe abortion, school dropout and unwanted pregnancy. In addition, items 15, 3 and 5 with mean values of 2.56, 2.56 and 2.50 were the least ranked items, that is, 13th, 13th and 15th. They indicated single – parenting, social isolation and poor health conditions.

Discussion of findings

In line with question one, the study revealed numerous causes of premarital sex which include negative peer pressure, cohabitation and sexual harassment among respondents. Majority of the respondents engage in premarital sex due to negative peer pressure, cohabitation and sexual harassment. Wright, Williamson, and Henderson (2006) concluded that insufficient information, negative peer pressure, and cohabitation were major contributors to sexual activity before marriage. Sambisa, Chandiwana, Curtis,

Mungati, Mohati and Mashange (2008) found that advice from friends was responsible for adolescents' involvement in unprotected sex, while Abullahi (2013) and Aneke (2015) found that premarital sex was caused by the individual risk-taking and exploration of young people due to a lack of knowledge about reproductive health. This finding agrees with the studies of Ekpenyong and Ekpenyong (2016) who identified negative peer pressure, financial issues, inadequate on-campus accommodation, decline in religious values or loss of religious inclination, and sexual gratification as factors responsible for premarital sex among female students in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. According to Olatunji (2019), 60% of pregnancies in Nigeria are the result of premarital sex (especially through cohabitation), and the lives of the young women who become mothers as a result are put in danger.

In line with question two, the study also revealed numerous consequences of premarital sex which include unsafe abortion, school dropout and unwanted pregnancy among respondents. There is no doubt the fact that premarital sex has dire effect on female students in tertiary institutions. Mashange (2008) pointed out that premarital sex can lead to unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. This result accords with the opinion of Hurissa, Tebeje, and Megersa (2014), who argued that premarital sexual activity among adolescents increases the risk of unwanted pregnancies, abortions, teenage births, emotional disability, and various complications, including death. Adeniyi (2019) noted that high rate of abortion in tertiary institutions is attributed to premarital sex. Premarital sex is always the cause of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Miscarriages are more likely to occur after a history of abortions due to the stress placed on the cervix and uterus. Adama (2013) argues for this by saying, "if abortion is performed by an inexperienced hand, it can perforate the uterus, which renders the woman unable to produce (or procreate)." That is to say, once she gets married; medically, she will never be able to have children again. Abortion is the murder of innocent human beings, and childless marriages are easily dissolved. Because of the increasing rates of adolescent pregnancy and their effects, Durosomo (2018) and Ige (2013) concluded that premarital sex is a problem in reproductive health among female adolescents. Abma and Martinez (2017), Stamatakos, Sargedi, and Konstantinos (2014), and Olatunji (2019) reported that there are many female students who get pregnant unexpectedly because they engage in

premarital sex. These unplanned and unwanted pregnancies force many of these female students to drop out of school and seek legal or illegal abortions.

Conclusion

The study concluded that were different causes of premarital sex among respondents which include negative peer pressure, cohabitation and sexual harassment. The study also revealed that unsafe abortion, school dropout and unwanted pregnancy were part of the major consequences of premarital sex among respondents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that;

- i. School counsellors should help to enlighten female students on healthy peer friendship to discourage bad influence and sex education should be taught in schools.
- ii. School authorities should use media means to counsel female students on the causes and consequences of premarital sex.
- iii. Counsellors should constantly be in contact with female students to educate them on sexuality and how best to manage their sexual feelings without necessarily engaging in premarital sex.
- iv. Parents should discuss openly about sex with their children so that they will not get involve, and out of curiosity to know the mysteries about sex.
- v. Health educators should rise to the challenge of organising enlightenment activities in schools in order to provide adequate reproductive health information to female students.
- vi. Religious groups on campus need to focus on sexual morality among the students and the society in general.

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